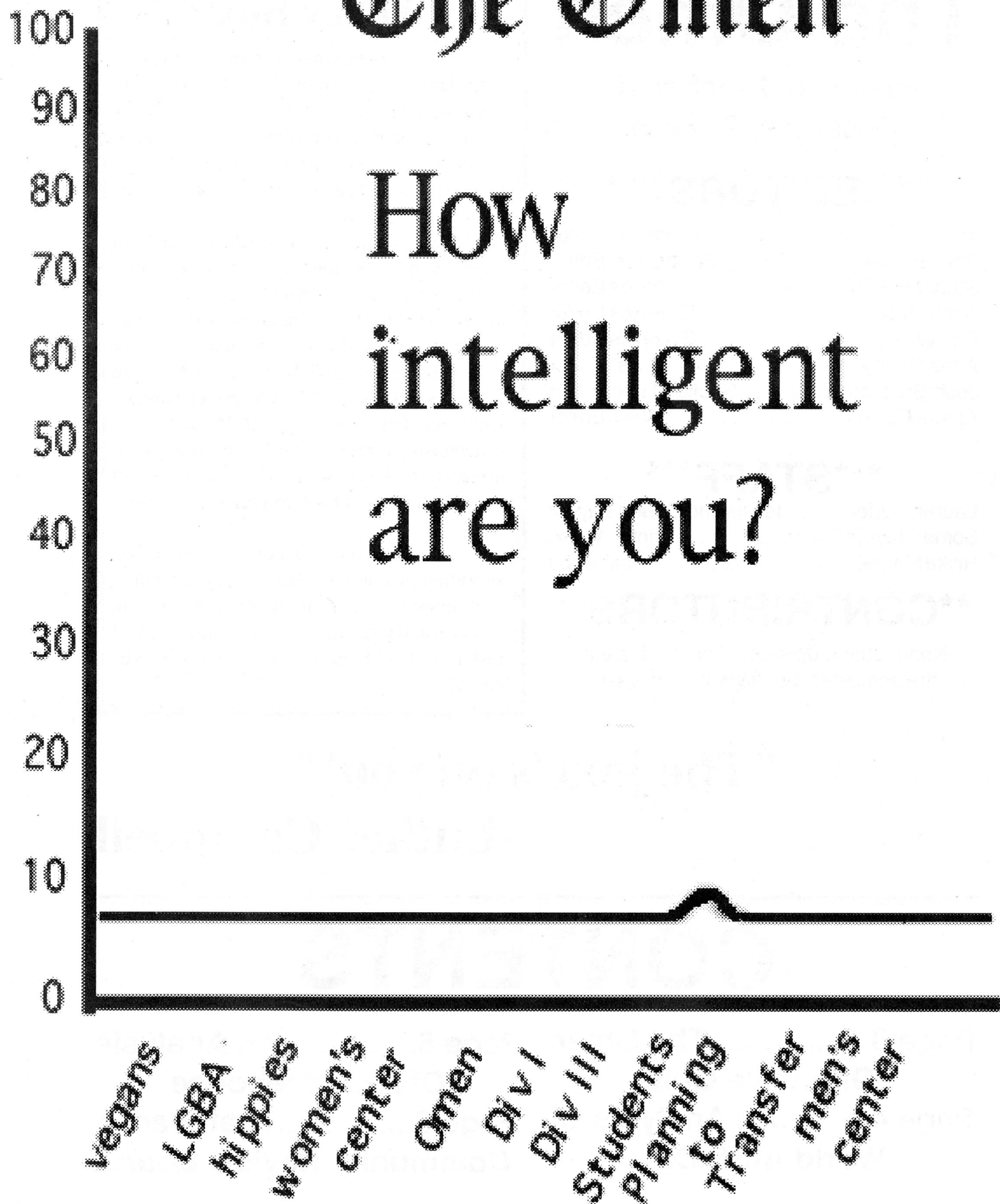


The Omen

How
intelligent
are you?



The Omen

Volume 6, Number 10

December 8, 1995

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CONTRIBUTORS

None, shape up kids, I know it's late in the semester, but give me a break!

Policy Box!

The Omen accepts from any member of the Hampshire community. We will not edit anything you write, as long as you are willing to be responsible for what you say. Libel, which we personally find amusing and entertaining for countless hours is just not able to be printed in this forum.

Submissions, which includes just about anything involving the Hampshire community in some way (news, opinions, artwork, etc.), are due on Saturday nights at 8:00 to the editor of the section in which you wish to appear, or to Ben Sanders (E-307, box 710), or Jonathan Land (E-311, box 527). We prefer submissions on disk (IBM or HIGH DENSITY Macintosh), although hard copy (on paper, dumbass) is okay as well. Label your stuff well and it will make it back to you with no problem.

So give us your news, commentary, short fiction, comics, satire, poetry, art, bulletins, questions, and anything else you can think of, and your beloved community rag will dish it back 300 times. What better way to be heard?

"The joke's on you!"

-Luther Campbell

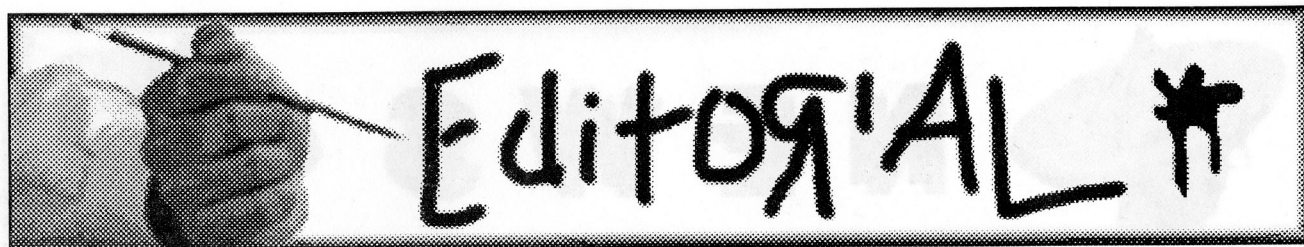
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Community Review Board



The Omen Offense-o-meter

Are you sick of The Omen ragging on your favorite student group? Do you want to know where you stand? Well take this handy-dandy little test and figure it out for yourself, Jerky.

1. You've used chalk to convey what you believe is an important societal message: +15

2. You think the Yurt is a good idea: +10

3. You've used the word "empowerment" more than 10 times in your life seriously: +20

4. You're from the state of New Jersey: +5

5. You look like you're from New Jersey, but you really aren't: +7

6. You're affiliated with The Phoenix: +10

7. You think you're the brightest hope for your generation, and no one's filled you in on the stark reality that you are no more than merely average: +25

8. You've filed your Div II in OPRA: +15

9. You're given a decent sum of money from the Lemelson office and you use it to build a hi-tech oar: +30

10. You get insulted by the stereotype of the "New York Jew", such as Jerry Seinfeld: +15

11. You are a "New York Jew" and/or Jerry Seinfeld: +25

12. Your last name is also

a noun: +21

13. You have considered bringing someone up on CRB charges because they hurt your feelings: +41

14. You believe in a deity and/or prey to rocks: +5

15. You believe that jokes cannot be made about dead people: +20

16. You believe that jokes cannot be made about serious political issues: +20

17. You're mom's like a 7-11, she's open 24 hours, she's hot to go, and for 89 cents she'll give you a Slurpee: +35

18. You had a really hard time choosing between seeing the Phish concert and the Poussaint/Murray debate: +50

19. You regularly wear a dress and you have long facial hair: +5

20. Your first name ends in a vowel: +16

21. You're a Computer Lab monitor: +39

22. You work at SAGA: +21

23. You work somewhere else on campus: +18

24. You don't work anywhere: +63

25. You're mentally or physically incapable of common sense: +3

26. You think you're capable of common sense, but ev-

eryone around you knows that by making such a statement, you clearly are not: +19

27. You've seriously used the term "body modification" for something other than amputation: +48

28. You're genuinely bummed out that the guy from Blind Melonhead overdosed: +57

29. You smell like the town of Hadley: +5

30. You're twice as dumb as you look: +14

31. You're three times as dumb as most of the things in the Library Art Gallery look: +67

32. You think that while Descartes' First Meditation has some reasonably good theories in it, the Second through Sixth Meditations leave quite a lot to be desired: -36

33. You don't believe that everyone's had bad experiences in their life: +32

34. You fit any stereotype what-so-ever: +100

35. When someone says "stereotype" you think "Sony": +20

36. You're a raging flamer and can't admit it: +18

37. You call the Switchboard to ask "What number is 2106?": +101

38. You can name the rap-

Continued on next page



An Analysis Of World AIDS Day

Last friday was world AIDS day. On that day, a fellow I only know of as Rick made a speech to a crowd in the back room of the SAGA cafeteria, around lunchtime. The matter seemed to be that during the activities that day geared towards AIDS awareness, only around six people had showed up at the Speak-In, an activity scheduled for noon that day. In this speech, Rick seemed shocked and obviously upset that so few people on campus had cared enough to appear at the event. I admire Rick for his speech, which took more courage and guts to get up there and discuss the issue, both on a social and personal level than I could ever hope to have. I am, however, not in the least bit surprised that such an occurrence of campus apathy took place.

experience, I have never met or knew someone that I knew was infected with the HIV virus. I never had to see them die of such a debilitating disease—AIDS has never made a personal impact in my life as it had with Rick. To me, it is nothing but a statistic and yet another reason to practice safe sex. Every single person on this campus would agree that AIDS is an important global issue, one that must be faced with awareness, education, and an open mind. The reality goes beyond these thoughts, however, and extend to the action- the action which, it seems, no one on the campus decided to invest time in taking. I do not see this as a tragedy or believe that it implicates any one on the Hampshire campus as being irresponsible or

bad. I see this as a fact, and can only attest to my opinions of why the AIDS day activities did not generate the awareness and importance that the people who organized it hoped it would.

It happens with me. I see it happen with many other people on campus. I think of it as some kind of overload that numbs the response to such issues-the poster epidemic. You see, I, like most other Hampshire students, I get my information of campus events and issues from the posters hung up all over campus. To me, all of them seem to be about some issue or another demanding my attention, my awareness, my care and action with others

Continued on page 8.

Hampshire College, although it is indeed a liberal institution, is really just like any other place. People are generally concerned with what concerns them, not on an abstract or global level, but on the daily basis of living-whether social, academic, or what not. I am not saying that people are not concerned—I am simply saying that people pay attention to what concerns them. Speaking at least from personal

Continued from previous page

per that impersonated John Wayne and had a song in the early 80's called "Rappin' Duke": -312

39. Random things just seem to strike a nerve with you: +1

40. You were insulted at anytime by this quiz: +502

Scoring: -348 to +0: Your

peers should worship you.

+0 to +500: Your peers should admire you.

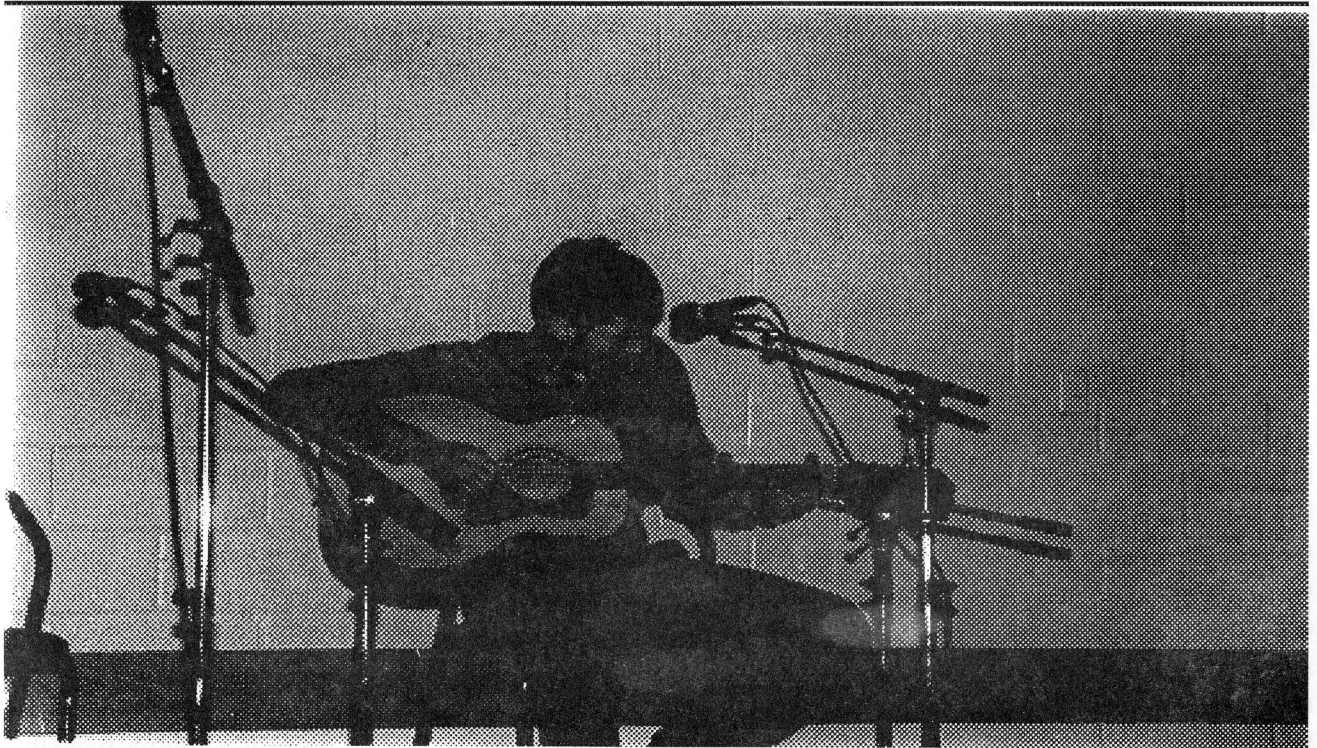
+500 to +1000: Your peers should hate you.

+1000 to +1518: Your peers should shoot you.

Jonathan Land
Managing Editor
The Omen

Offense Cont.

Mmmm...Coffee. Mmmm...House



November 30, 1995—DINING COMMONS. Among the many exciting forms of entertainment found at the Greenwich-Enfield Coffee House was Alec Silitch, the only act I caught and therefore the only picture we have. Well, that's a partial lie, as I did catch the tail-end of a lovely performance by Ethan Weed and Robin (who has a fine voice, but apparently no last name.). They belted out a pleasant array of songs and had the politely listening audience at their mercy. Our photographer took several shots of them; maybe they just aren't photogenic.

To continue the lie, I also witnessed the front-end of a set by Instrumentally Challenged, who drove me right out the door with a smarmy collection of medleys that many in the crowd found

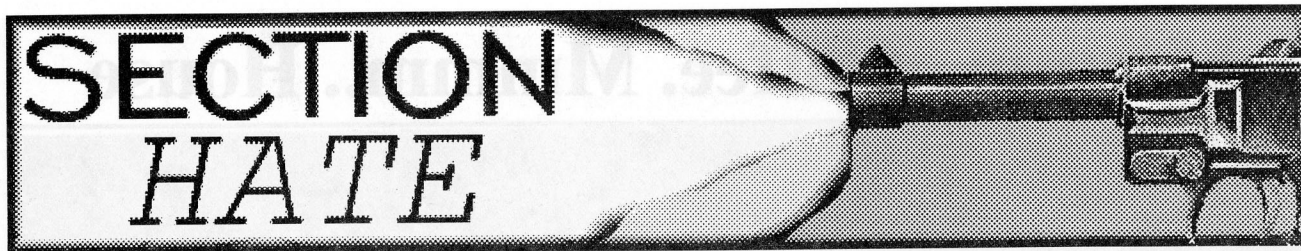
quite pleasing, but which made me want to stick my head in the toaster. Maybe some folks can get into vocalists who jut up/down their chins with every ascending/descending note, but my 5th-grade choir teacher lambasted me for that kind of behavior, and now it just seems wrong. And sure, I like surfer tunes, but not when they emanate from the warbling offspring of a barbershop quartet and a Girl Scout troop #5 singing "Koom Bah Yah." When the primary image a singing group evokes is that of Annette Funicello (before her MS, Jif, and her notable jugs), something is amiss.

And, to continue my trend of describing the event without really describing it at all...Alec was damn good. He would have been better if the audience had

shut up during his performance, but we can't have it all; people go to a coffee house to find company for the evening, and, in the absence of this, some cheesecake. Also, I have to admit, while I thought putting Alec on a mike would be a good idea (after working with him in the Dakin Coffee House last semester), I was wrong. Something of the music's charm was lost. I suggest you go see him if you have the opportunity, but do it in the tavern (smack. I mean, "The Negative Space Cafe."). Make sure he sings "John Henry."

Nice picture, though. Too bad I couldn't use it in the context of some actual news.

Stephanie Cole
News Editor
The Omen



C-To The-R-To The-Mo'-Fo'-B

Section Hate - 02 December 1995

I just turned 21 recently - yesterday, as a matter of fact, at the time of this writing - and, as I tick off another year of my life, I guess it's time for some careful retrospection, time for self-evaluation (can you find the Hampshire catchphrase in that sentence?). Just what have I done with my life? Have I done anything I regret? Are the paths I have chosen for myself the right ones? Etcetera.

Ah, fuck it. You want to read that kind of sentimental claptrap about as much as I want to write it. So, instead, for your voracious reading pleasure this week, I offer up this particular juicy tidbit: the Community Review Board.

First off, I have issues with the name of the CRB. Community Review Board? It sounds so innocuous. Of course, it comes out of Hampshire's particularly stealthy brand of nomenclature. "Community Review Board" is a misdirecting name. Why not call it "The Executioner's Committee" or "The Group of Peers who Hold the Future of Your Academic Career at Hampshire in Their Grubby Little Hands"?

Those would be more accurate, I believe. Or, if we want the highest achievable level of accuracy, the CRB should change its name to simply "The Man."

Now, I know that the CRB serves a valid, just and noble purpose on this campus. It is Hampshire's own twisted version of a judicial system, and we all know that any society needs some sort of judiciary to keep its proverbial head above the murky waters of chaos and anarchy. But, like our own country's judicial system, the CRB gets tangled up, more often than not, with a lot of nonsensical bullshit that shouldn't even be an issue. Why are there so-called "obscenity trials" clogging up our already horribly over-burdened courts? The CRB is subject to this same sort of silliness, only in a particularly Hampshire way.

Forgive me for harping on First Amendment rights, but this is an issue of personal importance to me, being an editorialist and all (as well as an actor and writer of fiction and drama, but that's secondary here in The Omen, because we all know that I'm going to be working at D'Angelo for the rest of my sodding life), and freedom of speech seems to be getting lost in the

metaphorical shuffle of things. I guess my beef isn't so much with the CRB, but with those who abuse it by bringing cases before that august body that have no business being there. But I *do* have some annoyance with the CRB, because they actually choose some of these cases for review, and, by doing that, lend those cases a weight they shouldn't even remotely have.

Let me explain: it seems that, just recently, the CRB chose to hear the case of an as-yet unnamed party who has a beef with the "counter-chalkers" from last semester's famed incident. Now, I thought we'd put that particular baby to bed after changing its diaper, giving it some warm milk and singing it a lullaby. Alas, and very, very unfortunately, the clock says 4 a.m., the baby's awake again and it's screaming. So - and this is what my highly placed informants tell me - the "counter-chalkers" are being brought up on charges. Just what the charges are I do not know, but I can guess: the good ol' "Violation of Community Norms" charge. Dollars to doughnuts that's what it is, kids.

I have already made it

Continued on next page.



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More Fun With The C.R.B.

well-known just how I feel about the phrase "Violation of Community Norms", so we're not going to go there again - I'm already being horribly repetitive by writing, once again, about First Amendment rights. Suffice it to say that this so-far anonymous person who has brought the charges against the "counter-chalkers" feels - and I'm hypothesizing here; this may not be the case, but for the sake of argument I'm assuming it is - violated by words.

Yup. Words again.

Okay. I'm going to spell this out nice and clear for y'all this time, so that the stupid ones out there can finally get it. Words are just, well, words - a series of letters strung together to form a unifying whole. We use these unified wholes to make language, to communicate with each other. Sometimes - well, okay, a lot of the time - these words are used not to communicate but to hurt.

But here's the great thing about words: they only carry weight if you *let* them carry weight. Words are not like knives; words do not violate a "safe space"; words do not kill. *We* let words be like knives, violate safe spaces, kill. If someone came up and said to me, "You goddamn motherfucking white-bread cracker piece of white trash, get the fuck out of my way 'cause I don't even want to *touch* you, you're so low," and I feel hurt, violated, whatever, it is because I have let the words have a hurtful weight. I'm not saying that people don't use words in a hateful, hurtful way - they do. But we are as much to blame as they, if not more so, if those words actually *hurt*.

That's why I think that this particular case before the CRB is so damn ludicrous. *It doesn't belong there*. That's also why I think the CRB is, in its present state, a monstrous thing.

As I said in last week's article, we *cannot* govern words. Unfortunately, the CRB tries to do just that by taking on cases such as this one. I'm sorry, but that is just *wrong*. Once we begin governing *some* words, where do we stop?

And that's this week's rambling Section Hate Tour of the First Amendment. Suggestions? Comments? Questions? Hate mail? Hey, monkey-nipples, send 'em my way: Box 21 and/or jobF92@hamp. Or you could write for The Omen - we ain't gonna review your ass, believe me.

So, till next we meet in this little dark alley, remember, folks: keep your feet on the ground, but keep reaching for the stars.

Goddamn motherfucking bastard-ass shitty pisspoor thppth.

Josh Brassard
Section Hate Editor

Dress To Impress

Fall Semi-Formal

December 9, 10 p.m.-2 a.m.

1 Dollar Admission

More World AIDS Day Commentary

Continued from page 4.

who would like to make a difference as well. The issues all flood my mind with the same level of importance—appealing to me to be concerned, aware, and active about the environment, women's rights, minority and cultural diversity, lesbian and gay rights, animal rights, socialism, maoism, sexual violence, STD's, safe sex and AIDS, Amnesty International. It can confuse and boggle the mind, especially when seen in passing while running to get one's mail, going to work on a project or paper at the library, picking up some food at the school store, etc., etc. And so when I walk by a sign that says "74% of women with AIDS are African American and Latina." my mind does not take it in, instead passes it off as another poster, another point, another issue in the vast sea of information presented to my brain on a daily level. Information that I question not because I don't think it isn't true, but because I tend to be cautious to any source and statis-

tic I encounter that I am not familiar with. If I wasn't, I would've listened to the socialist posters and protested that Charles Murray was a racist before going to the debate and hearing both sides of a very controversial issue.

What is AIDS to me? I should practice safe sex, use sterilized needles, practice caution with my partners by latex and testing, and in general realize the importance of the issue in society. I like to choose my issues, and my causes in a way that is personally affecting my lifestyle and my world. I want my issues to be real—and the way I deal with them to be real as well. To me, "a simply marvy evening of lounge music and elegant attire, interrupted periodically by rants, rages, and sensitive poetry that reflects the issues about HIV and AIDS, living and dying, and all that good stuff" sounded too trendy, too fake—like a small scale imitation of the Hollywood elite's benefit parties and excuses to show off the new dia-

mond studded red ribbon that has become the empty symbol of blank awareness—no better than those who are not aware are those who pretend to care for all the wrong reasons. To me, the only thing real on AIDS awareness day that broke through mine and everybody's life, even for a few minutes, was the actual anger, frustration, and sadness on Rick's face as he made that speech—and he is right—it does take an effort to be informed. It takes an effort even if you make a choice whether to attend an event, or talk to a person, or go beyond reading the poster. If people choose not to get involved in a certain event or issue, it may be because they are apathetic, uninformed, or simply that they chose not to. Any thoughts on AIDS day, this campus, or if any body chooses to respond to this article with a viewpoint of their own—hey—there's one way to raise awareness of your opinion for some people...

Amber Cortes